

Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

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SUBJECT: PCI DELEGATION VISIT TO PRAGUE

REF: ROME 9316

1. L'UNITA (JULY 6) REPORTS RETURN FROM PRAGUE OF PCI DELEGATION HEADED BY POLITICAL OFFICE MEMBER EMANUELE MACALUSO WHICH VISITED CZECHOSLOVAK CAPITAL JULY 1-5. DURING VISIT PCI DELEGATION HAD TALKS WITH KSC COUNTERPARTS LED BY PARTY SECRETARY BILAK, VISITED MLADA BOLESLAV AND WAS RECEIVED AT THE END OF THEIR STAY BY HUSAK.

2. ACCORDING L'UNITA, DELEGATIONS HEADED BY MACALUSO AND BILAK HAD GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON CURRENT INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS DURING WHICH BOTH SIDES CALLED FOR RAPID CONCLUSION TO CSCE AND DURABLE PEACE IN EUROPE. IN THIS CONTEXT, DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PEOPLES AND STATES OF ITALY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA WERE DEEMED DESIRABLE. BOTH DELEGATIONS REAFFIRMED NEED FOR COMMON INITIATIVES BY COMMUNIST, SOCIALIST AND DEMOCRATIC FORCES TO FOSTER DETENTE, REDUCE ARMAMENTS AND PROMOTE COOPERATION AMONG EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. DELEGATIONS ALSO UNDERLINED POSITIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF PAST AND FUTURE REGIONAL CONFERENCES BETWEEN COMMUNIST PARTIES AND CONDUCTED FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES

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AND ON THE CURRENT SITUATION WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVE-

MENT. L'UNITA REPORT CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT RESPECTIVE POINTS OF VIEW EXPRESSED BY THE DELEGATIONS WILL BE PASSED ON TO THE DIRECTIVE ORGANS OF THE TWO PARTIES FOR FULL EVALUATION.

3. COMMENT: AS THE FIRST PARTY TO PARTY CONTACT SINCE 1968 THE MACALUSO MISSION TO PRAGUE PRESUMABLY MARKS THE END OF THE FROZEN STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PCI AND THE KSC EXISTING SINCE THE END OF THE PRAGUE SPRING. GIVEN ALMOST CERTAIN FACT THAT PCI HAD GIVEN APPROVAL TO ABORTED BILAK VISIT TO ROME IN NOVEMBER, 1973 (ROME 13449), WE HAVE IMPRESSION, BASED ALSO ON OCCASIONAL REMARKS FROM PCI MEMBERS, THAT ITALIAN COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN INTERESTED IN TAKING THIS STEP FOR SOME TIME DESPITE CRITICAL POSITION WHICH PARTY HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN TOWARD 1968 EVENTS. WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT REASON FOR DELAY WAS DEGREE OF OPPOSITION WITHIN PCI, BOTH AT LEADERSHIP LEVEL AND FROM THE BASE, AND FEAR OF EMBARRASSING NEGATIVE REACTION FROM PUBLIC AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES. MACALUSO VISIT SUGGESTS THAT PCI LEADERSHIP JUDGED THAT TIME NOW PROPITIOUS TO BREAK THE ICE WITH MINIMUM RISK. NATURALLY, SENDING OF PCI DELEGATION TO PRAGUE RATHER THAN INITIALLY RECEIVING KSC DELEGATION HERE WAS DESIGNED TO REDUCE ADVERSE IMPACT DOMESTICALLY. PCI LEADERS MUST BE PLEASED, THEREFORE, THAT VISIT THUS FAR HAS GONE LARGELY UNNOTICED IN ITALIAN PRESS. IN FACT, ONLY COVERAGE WE HAVE SEEN WERE TWO SMALL REPORTS IN L'UNITA ITSELF WHICH GAVE CONSIDERABLY MORE PROMINENT ATTENTION TO MEETING JULY 7 IN BUCHAREST OF ANOTHER PCI DELEGATION HEADED BY CIRECTION MEMBER NOVELLA WITH CEASESCU. VOLPE

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